

From what I already know, most of the people around me have a religion. Christianity being the most common, followed by Buddhism. I guess Christianity is the most common religion of my friends mainly because I grew up in a Christian-based environment. My kindergarten was in a Catholic church, and my primary school was an Anglican community. Almost each of my relatives on my father's side, except my father, are Christians, while everyone on my mother's side, including my mother, are Buddhists. My father is an atheist. I am unsure of what I really am.

However, I truly believe that everyone has the right to choose their own religion.

Probably due to the reason that my father is an atheist, my mother took it upon herself and decided that our whole family, the three of us, should be Buddhists. So, we would make a visit to the temple once or twice a month to pray to the Buddha, clutching joss-sticks between our palms while staring up into the sky. Maybe those who are Buddhists would be praying fervently to the 'sky god', but what I mainly did was to stare up at the sky. I didn't feel a connection to anything above. When we had to kneel down on the large red mat for devotees to pray to the Goddess of Mercy, I did not feel anything either. Despite trying to pray wholeheartedly, I felt uncomfortable.

In my kindergarten and primary school, we had morning devotions everyday. Stories of Mother Mary and Jesus Christ would be told to us, and we would sing Christian songs and

pray to mark the end of devotion. Whenever I prayed to Mother Mary or Jesus, I somehow felt as though I was really a true Christian. Not that I detested Buddhism, but being a Catholic was what I really wanted.

I started reading the Bible when I was eleven, and until now pray to Jesus before I sleep and when I wake up. Everytime after I pray, I would feel a strong sense of relief, especially when I am going through tough times. I do not tell any of this to my mother, though. Somehow she is rather intolerant towards Christianity, and whenever I try mentioning Christianity, she scoffs and ignores me and tries to change the topic. I know that she is trying to force me into Buddhism, I have tried accepting Buddhism but have not been able to.

I really hope someday she would learn to accept that I have the right and the freedom to choose what I want to believe in, instead of forcing me to believe in other Gods I do not feel comfort in.

Having the freedom to choose my own religion; this I believe.